

Ellen Gets Her Man

FINAL INSTALLMENT

They had talked together then and Ellen had been started by Benham's appreciation of the beauties of the north country. Most of the men she knew were rough, hardened by the rigorous life. There had been something almost poetic in John Benham's understanding. In some intangible way it seemed that a bond of friendship of common understanding between them was born there at that moment. Now Ellen knew that it was love.

For a long time Ellen had stood there across the dying campfire flames, staring at this strange, still, elemental man. Her mind seethed with truant thoughts, and words she dare not speak lay close to her lips. Then one of the sleeping Indians had stirred, breaking the spell. She had moved away.

"Good-night," she had called softly. "Good-night—John Benham."

She shivered a little now at the memory. The great disappointment at the later turn of event filled her heart almost to the bursting point. Here was her mate—the man she loved—and she had so little faith and understanding that she had believed all the false reports and lying stories about him. She had insisted on calling the Northwest Mounted Police and demanding Benham's arrest. To be sure, later events had cleared him of suspicion and trapped the real culprit, but she could well understand why Benham should hate her and refuse to listen to her apologies.

Time passed, and she was unconscious of it. She merely sat and looked out towards a future which seemed very drab and very grey and very empty. At length she heard voices approaching. She rose and stepped ashore, her face stony and expressionless.

Whitlow was there with his prisoner. In the background was Moosac and John Benham, with a number of the tribe slinking furtively beyond.

"I'm sorry, Miss Mackay," Whitlow was saying. "But you and Moosac will have to return to the Fort in another canoe. I cannot chance your safety by carrying you with me and my prisoner. Deteroux is desperate."

Ellen nodded briefly. "Just as you say, trooper," she answered.

Whitlow stepped up to Deteroux, a tiny key in his hands. "Let's see those cuffs, Deteroux," he said, briskly. "I'll see that you earn your passage with a paddle. And make no mistake about it. I'll shoot you dead if you try any tricks."

Deteroux shrugged again and held out his hands. The cuffs fell away.

The next moment Deteroux exploded into movement. One terrific back-hand blow swept Whitlow to

the ground, half unconscious. With a swoop that rivalled the speed of a diving fish-hawk Deteroux was upon him. The next second he was erect again, and in his hand was Whitlow's revolver.

"Back!" he snarled. Whirling, he thrust the canoe out into the lake with a tremendous shove, and by a flying leap settled in the stern of it. Then he caught up a paddle and sent the frail craft foaming away.

The paralyzed group behind him broke into feverish action. Benham raced away up to the shore where other canoes were beached, but already running like a shot, old Moosac was leading him. Whitlow lurched to his feet and shouted for a rifle.

"John!" cried Ellen despairingly. "John Benham. He will kill you." Benham did not hear her. Long before she could reach him he was aloft and hurling all his splendid strength against a paddle. His canoe drove out into the lake with surging eagerness.

But before him was still another of the birch-bark crafts. In the stern of it was a hunched brown figure, with wrinkled, seamed face twisted in a mask of savage hatred. Old Moosac was launched upon some strange trail of retribution.

With perceptible speed he drew away from Benham, and closed in on the fleeing Deteroux. His ancient cunning was stronger than their great strength.

Deteroux leaned on his paddle, and the power he bent into his stroke snapped the overstrained maple, short in his hands. Snarling, he whirled, whipping up the gun.

In the same second the canoes struck, and Moosac lunged out in a great sprawling leap. A moment his spread-eagled body hung clear in the air and Ellen saw, in the upraised right hand, a length of glittering steel.

Straight into the center of that flying body Deteroux flung a bullet. But Moosac's desperate lunge carried him through to his goal. Ellen saw him crash down upon Deteroux and saw the glittering knife rise and fall—rise and fall. And when it rose the third time it no longer gleamed in the sun. Then both men toppled into the water.

There was a sudden whirl of foam. A hand appeared—once, in it a knife still gleamed. Then it slid slowly from sight. At this moment the straining Benham drove his canoe surging over the spot. His right arm shot down into the water to the snoulder and gripped something that struggled weakly.

Slowly Benham straightened and dragged the limp figure of Moosac over the side of his canoe. His glance seemed to probe the placid depth of the lake again for a moment, then with a gesture of resignation, he spun the canoe about and drove it back towards the shore.

Moosac was still breathing when they lifted him gently out, but it was plain that life was ebbing swiftly. He was shot through the center of the body.

White-faced and murmuring with pity, Ellen cradled the old Indian's head in her lap, and with gentle fingers smoothed back the thin, black, dripping locks.

"Moosac," she murmured brokenly. "On Moosac—now can I face Deteroux now? What can I tell her?" Moosac stirred. His eyes opened. Strangely enough, he had heard Ellen's words.

"You may tell her our honor is clean, now, little gentle-heart. You may tell her our own Fawn Eyes, who has been long in the arms of the Great Spirit is smiling again, for, though Moosac was old, his hand was cunning and his arm was strong."

"Many, many summers ago it was, when Fawn Eyes danced and sang through all the seasons. She was young and joyous. Her sweetness and beauty was that of the wood violet. Then Deteroux came.

"He, too, was young, and good to look upon. Yet even then the man was evil and his tongue was forked. And so there came a day when Fawn Eyes crept home to us. Her spirit was gone and her shame like some terrible disease. And one dark night her spirit went away to the Great Master.

"Long—long has Moosac waited. But today the trail ended, and at its ending Moosac's arm was strong and his aim was true. And Fawn Eyes is smiling."

Moosac's eyes closed again and gradually, the harsh, savage set of his features softened into a look of peace. Tears blinded Ellen's eyes and trickled down her cheeks. They fell moist upon Moosac's wrinkled forehead.

Ellen felt a hand upon her shoulder, powerful—yet gentle. She looked up. John Benham was bending over her. "He was a very brave man, Miss Mackay," Benham murmured. "And he shall have a brave man's grave."

They buried Moosac when the purple gloom of the forest was passing in the shadows. Then began the flurry of departure. Tepees were stripped of covering, implements of the hunt, and trapping industry were gathered. Bales of furs unearthed.

Ellen sought John Benham. She found him at the lake edge—alone. A single Peterborough canoe rested on the sands. Ellen's pulse leaped, and she looked at the silent Benham slyly.

Presently Benham cleared his throat.

"I owe you an apology, Miss Mackay," he said, a trifle awkwardly.

"I'm afraid I've acted pretty boorishly. But Whitlow told me of the source from which you and your father had received certain—certain misinformation."

But Ellen shook her head. "No," she exclaimed. "You owe me nothing. It is the other way round. I was the offender. There are some things in life that simply cannot be. That was one of them, and I should have had sense enough to know it, despite what was told me. I would like you to know, John Benham, that I am bitterly sorry for my unjust words and thoughts. And it is I who apologize fully."

Suddenly she smiled, a gentle, child-like smile. Benham smiled back at her, his eyes warm and glowing. Ellen laid her hand in his, while her heart fluttered and her breath came fast. But Benham's clasp tightened with spasmodic intensity and he had her hand imprisoned.

He laughed low triumphant. "Ellen," he muttered huskily. "Ellen."

Her hand stole upward until her finger-tips were caressing his swollen eyes. "I'm sure your poor eyes would be quickly well again if you would let me kiss them, dear," she said softly.

The next moment she was gasping and writhing with exquisite pain, for Benham's arms were crushing her to him, vibrant with steel. At last the man and woman stirred and stood slightly apart, their eyes locked in strange glory.

The lonesome trail was over.

THE END

TO DISCUSS CONTROL OF POULTRY DISEASE

Diseases common to chickens claim a heavy toll each year unless necessary precautions are taken to check the ravages.

The old saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is especially true in handling poultry.

One of the most common diseases is coccidiosis, says H. C. Gauger, poultry disease specialist at the college. When this disease strikes a flock, the grower should take immediate steps to curb the epidemic.

A complete discussion of this disease, its symptoms and the steps necessary to drive it out of the flock, will be given in a radio talk on the Carolina Farm Feature program Friday, May 7, by Mr. Guder.

MORE THAN 5,000 WILL BE AIDED BY SOCIAL SECURITY ACT IN N. C.

As an indication of claims expected to be paid in 1937 to persons employed in industry, the social security board announced today that approximately 323,684 persons or their estates will be eligible this year for lump-sum payments under the federal old-age benefit plan, and that about \$16,000,000 will be paid in these benefits.

It is announced by Marvin Shirley, field representative of the social security board in the Salisbury office, that an estimated 5,959 eligible claims will be filed in North Carolina during 1937, of which 460 are expected from the Salisbury office.

Claims forms and assistance in accounting them are available at that office for individuals residing in Rowan, Iradell, Catawba, Alexander, Caldwell, Wilkes, Watauga, Ashe and Alleghany counties, all of which are included in the territory of the Salisbury office. "Eligible individuals" are those who have been employed since January 1, 1937, in a "covered" industry and have reached the age of 65. Where such individuals have died, claims may be made by the estate or by near relatives.

FISHING DATES SET FOR PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST

To the disciples of Isaac Walton in western North Carolina the announcement of the opening of the co-operative game management areas on the Pisgah National Forest will be of great interest. The Sherwood forest on the Mt. Pisgah division, the Mt. Mitchell unit on the Mt. Mitchell division, and the Daniel Boone unit on the Grandfather mountain division will be opened for fishing on May 7, 8, 9; June 4, 5, 6; and July 2, 3, 4. These areas have been stocked yearly with brook and rainbow trout and have received intensive protection during the closed seasons. The areas included in the proposed extensions of these units have not received protection in the past and fish will not be as plentiful there as within the old established refuges.

The county agent of Watauga county has assisted in a survey of the county in regard to establishing rural electric lines.

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EXPLANATION . . .

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